HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

ITS ORIGIN FROM THE BED AND THE CHEST

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HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

ITS ORIGIN FROM THE BED AND THE CHEST

BY

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Price 75c, postage paid

Connecticut Wing Chair, from the factory of L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

EVOLUTION AND the Origin of Species! This subject is one whose discussion among us produces the utmost bitterness of feeling and, on occasion, leads to regrettable results. Yet the thought and expression therein involved can not, like the crying of an infant, be suppressed by a soothing syrup, and similar methods of reasoning are adopted by those who deal with topics infinitely less vital and spiritual than the animal "primates" or the vast body of Law, which Sir Henry Maine, a contemporary of Charles Darwin, declared that he had reduced to two or three basic principles. To go backward from the complicated to the simple and the primitive is now the accepted method of procedure for the student, whether his love of research leads him to the far-stretching fields of science or holds him confined to a more restricted and humble area of observation. The playgrounds of a Marconi spirit are protected by sharp defences from the intrusions of less subtle intelligences, whose admittance would lead them to insanity and destruction. But all about the normally, moderately gifted individual lies the domain of material things upon whose rightfully ordered creation, maintenance and development so much of his own welfare and advancement depends.

Among these things those which constitute his personal environment are of great importance,

since they are, to no slight degree, the determinants of his prevailing mood and, therefore, of his attitude toward his fellows. These things he should know, as he knows his human associates. Precisely as before making a close friend, he proves the character and temperament of the candidate for his intimacy and, meanwhile, gathers knowledge of his family and heredity, so, also, should he study, both singly and collectively, the objects which, so to speak, populate his habitual surroundings, whether he be the possessor of a palace-residence, the tenant of a modest apartment or the occupant of a hall-bedroom. Just as bearing, voice, and choice of words offer testimony which can not be controverted, so the substance, structure, forms and colors of inanimate things—in some instances, their mere state of being, good or ill—invite or repel and have the power to bind contracts or to prevent the establishment of human relationships.

Nor is this power dependent, in the case of the man, upon wealth or station, or in that of the inanimate objects, upon richness of material or elaborate treatment. It is purely a question of fitness, of efficiency in its older and better sense, of an elusive aesthetic quality which "matches" and pairs, associates and harmonizes.

From this point of view, any one of the three widely differing places—the palace-residence, the middle-class town-apartment, the city hall-bedroom—becomes a Kimberley mine of potential riches requiring for extraction and possession only

good-will and tireless effort; the riches being mere facts and working theories essential to the student of Evolution and the Origin of Species, with the subject restricted to the principal portable objects of human environment.

Of the three mentioned places—which for the student are merely laboratories, the palace-residence most attracts the young American who there finds a counterpart of the home into which he was born or the one to which he aspires with a Napoleonic will capable of bringing miracles to pass. Even though bred in a swarming, reeking tenement, luxury does not affright him, and, as he lifts his spoon in the soup kitchen, he muses upon the possibilities of his entrance one day, as President, into the White House or of his ultimate possession of a Park Avenue mansion. But liberty carries with it responsibilities, and the boy, whether patrician or proletarian, must be educated to accept and make use of them. His reach must be made to exceed his grasp; so that, whatever may be his definitive station, he may be prepared to fill one yet more important and higher. So, having been equipped with the fundamentals of morality, he should next be taught to respect his belongings, whether few or many, and to arrange them in an orderly, artistic manner; the latter being possible, even when the property itself is of coarse substance and of crude manufacture. And further, this instruction ought not be given under the form of arbitrary commands; since, in that case, it will be deprived of a

large and by far the most civilizing and gracious part of its influence. It must be explained by governing principles, such as those of proportion, balance, symmetry, light and dark. For only by this means will the youth be freed from dull, deadening obedience, master his subject by coming to realize and feel its underlying reasons, and be enabled himself to possess and to propagate it.

The half-formed student may now be conducted to the palace-residence and the system of his instruction changed. From this point he will be taught objectively and his pleasure in his work vastly multiplied. For the announcement of laws to which some measure of dryness was inherent, the application of those laws or principles is now substituted, and it is attended by the appeal of interesting substance, of form and of color, to which the youth will be sensitive in proportion to his possession of hereditary or personal tastes, as also to the environment in which he has been reared. Finally, in proportion to the degree of intelligence with which he has apprehended the nearly open secrets of effective arrangement, the interior of the palace-residence will be for him either something less than a chaos and riot of splendid productions of art and of industry, or, on the contrary, a thoroughly known, well-loved area, like an aristocratic, dignified city-quarter, in which each square has its distinguishing statue or fountain and each house its displayed number.

It may be that this same youth has a rudimentary acquaintance with or at least an awakening

interest in science, and that he has visited some great institution, for example, the New York Museum of Natural History, in which are displayed upon an imposing, tree-like chart the animal "primates"; the primitive being later developed into man, therein dominating all the other organisms pictured with him, by reason of the superiority—to a certain extent indefinable—resident in his limbs, in his indicated action, and in the expression of his blunted features which flickers like a faint flame seen through dust-laden glass.

If provided with these tastes and experience, the observer will at once, although unconsciously, seek the "primates" among the large number of objects which are arranged to afford comfort and pleasure or to produce effect in each of the divisions or rooms of the palace-residence. By the simple act of locating them, which he has accomplished without willing it, he receives a clear impression of any separate division or assemblage to which, for the moment, he may devote himself. In this place the collections being a series of more or less ideal environments adapted to the various phases of human life, as passed in wealth and luxury, the component objects must all be ranked under the descriptive and everywhere current word of "Furniture".

In so beginning his studies in the origin and evolution of species in furniture, the youth must not be disheartened by the critic who may assert that the highly exceptional residence of a

Butterfly Table, from the factory of
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Vanderbilt or a Gould is a place of influence hostile, rather than favorable, to the advancement of knowledge relating to the history of household essentials. But the objection is thoughtless—even childish. Primates and subordinates exist in all kingdoms of life and thought. They are changeless in principle; subject, it is true, to extreme specialization and extreme distortion, but never exceeding the limits of the class to which they severally belong. Expressed poetically, "man alone has the upright spine and the power, (as he walks) to contemplate the stars"; while animals look out upon a level determined by their own height, and their ability to see about them is restricted. In the same way, there are hard and fast distinctions among the things which man creates for his own use or his pleasure. A bed, whether of primitive contrivance or of highly developed type, is instantly recognizable and makes but a single appeal to the observer. The same is true of the chest, and these two things of necessity and of daily use, under their various forms, are the "primates" of household essentials: considerations of sustenance being, of course removed from the comparison. And it may be said further of the bed and the chest that they are the parents of all other portable furnishings of the human habitation, as will be obvious to the thinker after brief reflection.

Of these two pieces the bed, in the opinion of most persons, will be entitled to the first place. But its history needs to be traced only to the rise

to mention of the barbarians of Western Europe; since the highly civilized ancient peoples, like the Egyptians and the Greeks, lived their lives in a single spot of earth and had no occasion to transport their property from place to place. They had also, by processes of reasoning similar to our own, evolved the things which they fashioned to forms not unlike those which are now in use. To-day every reader of a city newspaper can picture to himself, at least crudely, the carved and gilded wooden furniture recovered from the kingly tombs of the Nile Valley, and dating from fifteen to twelve centuries before our era. Again, every high school boy or girl is familiar with the plan of the normal Greek town-house which was so oriented as to permit a change of bedrooms at the change of season, in accordance with which the occupants of the narrow cells set against the inner face of the exterior side-walls of the building, carried their couches across the open court from north to south in the autumn and in the opposite direction at the beginning of spring.

In these types of beds present-day interest is shown only by the artist and the lover of antiquity, except in so far as both the Egyptian and the Greek influence appeared in French interior decoration during the First Empire (1804-1814), and as Greek details were profusely used in English and in American architectural detail throughout the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

In the main, all observations made upon examples chosen from antiquity are more or less

foreign to our subject, although they are not inappropriate to it. But the development with which we are for the moment concerned is the bed of forest leaves, assembled, mayhap for the use of one night, by the roaming, predatory Teuton before the time when he received the first touches of Roman urbanity. From a single mass or pad, spread with an abundance of animal skins, the bed, it is easily understood, segregated into mattress and pillows, while the skins, at first removable at will, were later cut and sewn into cases.

In producing the primitive form of barbarian bed, the man showed his superiority to the animal at first only in the arrangement of the soft, yielding material, but later by placing this material in a roomy and shallow box or chest, which was plainly the forerunner of the modern bedstead. As residence became more stable, straw was substituted for foliage and moss, and, in the early Middle Ages, feathers, wool and hair came into use for filling the sleeping-cushions. By the opening of the thirteenth century—that period of eminent popes, kings and nobles, of great builders, artists and craftsmen—bedsteads were made of fine woods and enriched with inlaid, painted and carved ornament; thus showing established respect for personal property and the advance in civilization effected by the Western Europeans, since the time when the Roman Tacitus, in the first Christian century, wrote of them (under the name of Germans) that they dwelt in *carts*, "hating cities and regarding them as tombs for the living."

Still following the development of the first of the two "primates" of all household furnishings, one finds that for good reasons the woodwork of the bed became less heavy and ornate in the fourteenth century, while its accompanying draperies acquired new importance. The diminution in weight and rigidity of form was made for the convenience of great personages, whose custom it was to take with them their favorite belongings, as necessity called them from castle to castle or from castle to camp. But the more urgent cause for change in the composition of the bed was due to the lack of comfort in the interiors of the time, which, it would seem, was greatest in those of the highest dignity. Therefore, to protect the sleepers from the cold and draughts incident to wide spaces enclosed by stone walls, curtains, lined with furs and in some instances superbly embroidered, were suspended either from the ceiling or from an iron bar projecting from the wall. Such was the origin of the *Tester Bed;* the first of these nouns being derived from the Old French word for "head" (teste), here applied to the draperies suspended above the framework of the piece. This form, in turn, developed into what has been fitly called "a room within a room", and, in case the draperies were hung from a projecting bar, they left a practicable passage between the wall and the sleeping couch, available for service and ultimately serving as a reception room. Known as the *ruelle* (narrow street—alley) in France, it became, in the noble Parisian houses of the seven-

teenth century, the favorite meeting place of the great ladies of the Court of Louis XIV, who found there a mental stimulant not unlike that which is derived by American women of the present day from their morning musical and literary clubs. From assemblies of this kind gentlemen were by no means excluded, and the Grand Monarch himself, on awakening in his sumptuous bed, while still reclining, received his intimate associates (*petit lever*); afterward, when fully robed, passing into the large apartments of the Louvre or Versailles to pronounce upon the weighty affairs of State.

The heavily draped bed, a place of suffocation, a *nidus* of disease-producing germs, was adopted in all its splendor-veiled horror by the British, who persisted in its use long after France had modified it in the direction of lightness, and, to some degree, had opened it to the external air, by restricting the tester and curtains to the head only. Thus, slowly, in both countries, this evil righted itself. The English oak of the seventeenth century, demanding ponderous hangings of velvet or damask, was superseded, a hundred years later, by the graceful, although still stable designs in mahogany of Chippendale, the Brothers Adam, Hepplewhite and Sheraton, which, led by a natural process and across the Atlantic to the free-standing and altogether sanitary beds in which we rest at night, to awaken, refreshed and strengthened, for the work of the following day.

The second of the two "primates" among all

Candle Stand, from the factory of
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household movables (the better word for "furnishings" and the one by which they are designated in the languages derived from the Latin), has a history even surpassing in interest that of its former almost constant companion, the bed. Unlike the latter, the chest has often eluded recognition from the non-expert by assuming the aspect of some other essential piece which belonged more especially to his period. But its transformations always have been useful and skilful, from the time when it held secure the plunder of the Goths and Vandals who sacked Rome in the fifth Christian century, until it reached its most beautiful stage of development as the container of the bride's *trousseau* in the Italian Renaissance. The chest, at first both strong-box and seat, gradually acquired a back and arms, and in this stage of its existence was an appanage of State, rather than an article of use. It so appeared in the second half of the fifteenth century, when Louis XI of France sat upon it as a throne and beneath a hood, carved out of walnut in a pierced-leaf Gothic design, which had been added to the back in order to protect the royal head from currents of wintry air. Finally, the treasure-chest in the seat was suppressed, but the chair itself, until the sixteenth century, continued to be the symbol of royal, seigneurial or ecclesiastical dignity. Until that time commoners had in their dwellings for seats only that franker, more evident form of chest, the stool, as also the bench without back, and hardly would they have installed themselves, even for a moment's enjoy-

ment, within the awe-inspiring confines of the chair, sacred to them through association and architectural in character; recalling in both structure and ornament the churches which they regarded as the very Gates of Heaven.

Absolutely the same idea of dignity was inherent in the early chair of all European countries, and the design of the piece was everywhere similar, as may be proved by examples chosen from an area extending from Constantinople to London, and varying from a bishop's throne encased in ivory, now preserved in Ravenna on the Adriatic shore of Italy, to the oldest English specimen of its kind, the massive oaken chair of King Edward I (1273-1307), covered with elaborately molded *gesso* or plaster and completely gilded.

And here, to assure entire accuracy of information, it is necessary to indicate an opposing strain, as it were, in the development of the chair, which was active from before the Christian era and produced a specialized type, persistent, but restricted in its uses. This form again lies outside our present subject and, furthermore, it does not descend from the chest. It is the folding-seat, the most distinguished ancestor of which was carried on the arm of the Consul and of various other officers of the Roman State, as they moved about in the crowded assemblies of their people; serving them at once as a mark of their enviable rank and as a permanently available means of physical relaxation whenever they chose to adjust it. This pliable type was accepted by the Teutonic chieftains of

France, as we learn from the famous example in the Louvre, known as the throne of King Dagobert, an heroic personage of the seventh century. In this specimen the object of the original would seem to be defeated, since its portable quality is negligible. It is executed in bronze with the contours and details of the casting here and there sharpened with the chisel, and, by the very fact of its substance, it was prevented from begetting a line of descendants. Nor do we see it in its first state, for in the twelfth century it was fitted with arms and back by the great prime minister and historian, Suger, Abbot of St. Denis, whose action vastly increased its sentimental value. But it must be repeated that it is segregated from the legitimate family of the architectural chair, as is also the curious, interesting structure composed of many slat-like, curved wooden members, arranged in two groups of differing span: the smaller convex group forming the base, with the larger concave assemblage making the seat of the familiar Savonarola model, frequently found in spacious, wainscoted halls in which the inclination, like the invitation to sit, is limited to a brief moment.

In the history of the legitimate chair we have now arrived at a point of change. During the Renaissance it ceased to be a symbol of power, or a mark of special privilege, and furnishings of this nature could be possessed and used by any one having the means to purchase them. It was, therefore, but logical that they should be modified and adapted to meet the requirements of their

owners. The chair, following the lead of architecture, then discarded all allusions to the venerable preceding style, the Gothic, which was denounced as barbarous by the leaders of the new movement. The carvings of the wooden frames smiled with the faces of nymphs and fauns half-hidden in garlands of luxuriant foliage, and the embroideries of the seats and backs were eloquent with the triumphs of Love.

As the influences of the Renaissance spread outside the Peninsula, France showed itself to be the country most prompt to receive and to develop them; this susceptibility being in part due to the Latin spirit of the people, and in part also to the wars which for thirty years (1494-1525) closely mingled the French and the Italians, albeit as enemies. But as the conflict was purely one of princes, resembling nothing so much as a game of chess, and with little patriotism involved, the more northern country, through its most artistically gifted sons and with no sense of humiliation, absorbed the culture of Roman antiquity, which had been revived on its own soil by the descendants of those who had created it. France became Italian, the native arts were transformed and even the language yielded to foreign authority. The *Italianate*, as it has been named, lasted for some sixty years, at the end of which those who had been subjected to the invasion of alien art and taste, reasserted themselves and there appeared the anomaly of an original national style founded upon borrowed elements: in architecture the

palace of Louvre; in sculpture a vigorous, voluptuous line, distinct and characteristic; in painting a solidity of composition and a brush-work not to be confused with those of the contemporary artists of other countries.

Before the middle of the seventeenth century Louis XIV, a boy of five years, was seated on the throne for a reign of nearly three quarters of a century, during the most prolific portion of which, from 1660 until 1690, the enlarged palace of Versailles, with all that it implies in the decorative arts, was called into being, principally by the younger of the two architects Mansart (Mansard). For the movable furnishings of the most splendid portions of this building, capable, it is said, of lodging five thousand persons, silver was largely employed — for example, in variously-formed seats, in tall candelabra, and even in the boxes or tubs to contain the orange-trees of the conservatory devoted to them. But the intrinsic value of these objects prevented their preservation. In the declining years of the king, when the national treasury had been depleted by royal extravagance and disastrous wars, and already one tenth of the population of France was begging on the highways, the silver furniture was sent to the melting-pot, as invariably happens when a precious metal, rather than artistic skill, is made to be the overpowering element in any article of luxury. A kinder fate was reserved for the wooden furnishings destined to become models of a style which, after the lapse of more than two centuries,

Desk, from the factory of
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is still admired in its proper setting, and not infrequently used, although in many instances quite injudiciously.

The designers of these now classic pieces intended them for definite positions from which they were not to be moved. Their height was determined by that of the ceilings above them, and their contour by the demands of the special divisions of space which they were to occupy. Good proportion, symmetry and its dependent principle of balance were the considerations which governed their production, and in no work of architecture are these laws more clearly stated than in the Louis XIV arm-chair, which is important to our present purpose because of its influence upon our most prized Colonial or American Georgian type, known under its English name of "Chippendale".

In the case of the French chair the principles already mentioned may be accepted here without comment; but not so the graceful, slow-moving, yet emphatic curve of the leg, credit for which is given by many hasty and careless observers to the English, although the priority of the French use is established by date. Even so authoritative a writer as Penderel-Brodhurst in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, while making no false claims for his countrymen, declares that the single curve employed in the legs of chairs, tables and cabinets, known as the "cabriole" (from the French verb *cabrioler*, to prance like a horse), "came immediately from Holland." But

what would seem to be the real explanation of the attractive, sinuous line is made by a Frenchman, M._____, in his generally accepted and extensive work, "The Art of recognizing styles." Therein he states that the boot of the cavalier, with its high top made of soft leather extending to the thigh of the wearer and yielding to his every movement, provided the suggestion for the cabriole. This explanation satisfies both the eye and the mind, since the haunch of a lusty rider, thickened by covering of the nature described, would give the precise curve of the chair-leg and, furthermore, in the late seventeenth century the cavalier was for Parisians a most familiar and agreeable sight, as he traversed the streets—largely unpaved and lacking drainage—of the capital whose earlier name had been Lutetia, the "city of mud". Again, it is repeated commonplace experience, rather than the rare and the epoch-making, that is always rendered or interpreted in the best expressions of both the major and the minor arts. It is not to be forgotten that the ancient Greeks represented in certain of their finest moldings the rhythm of actively flowing water, with which they came in daily contact, and that their principal plant-*motif* in ornament was the spiny acanthus, which yet today grows wild in the waste places of their country. Thus, obeying a similar impulse, the French cabinet-maker reproduced in the support of his chair a gesture that he saw constantly made in the street upon which opened the windows of

his tiny shop. Finally, if the cabriole curve did not pass directly from France to England, it made but a traveller's passage through Holland, which in the last decade of the seventeenth century, for political reasons, entertained such friendly relations with the largest of the British Isles.

Having been adopted by the Chippendale family of London, where the second of the three men of the same baptismal name, Thomas, was already making a reputation, the cabriole curve allied itself with new elements of structure and decoration. It no longer symbolized the booted leg of a cavalier. The somewhat delicate, close-rolled scroll at the floor-line in the French model specialized into the fierce claw of a dragon, enclosing in its grasp a ball; the back of the chair lost its soft upholstery for which wooden splats were substituted, fine and ribbon-like, which often at mid-height were apparently fastened together by a bow-knot; this *motif* having been modified from the French type so characteristic of the reigns of Louis XIV (1643-1715) and Louis XVI (1774-1789).

The most admirable of all Chippendale chair-models was now complete and the chair has always been regarded as the best product of the family workshop. It was executed in mahogany which for the finest uses had replaced the massive oak, partly because of its beauty of color and of natural markings, and partly because of the taste or rather "craze" for tropical and Oriental substances and wares created by the newly developed

marine trade routes. Examples of the type passed into the British Colonies of North America and were there most cleverly imitated and interpreted by transplanted, as well as by native cabinet-makers, notably at Philadelphia. Of these beautiful pieces many are still extant, having survived the decline of taste in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, which neglected, altered to grotesqueness or even destroyed so much of the good work of our more remote forefathers. In the revival which followed the Centennial Exposition of 1876, the "claw and ball" model became almost the object of a cult: an insane desire of possession—in certain cases and localities quite as ignorant as the former neglect—raising the market price of such a piece to a sum really disproportionate with its decorative value. In the eighteen hundred eighties private collectors and dealers in American "antiques" began to travel laboriously the country roads in those portions of the United States which were centers of colonial population; stopping at every promising farmhouse to inquire for "old mahogany" and "curly maple", examples of which they not seldom found in out-buildings, wrapped in cobwebs, indented with ruthless blows, and, if adaptable to such purposes, even serving as containers for tools or poultry-food. With the present generation the cult of the old models has grown somewhat more, but still not sufficiently, intelligent; while the demands of the dealers have gradually increased, until the

majority of those who were endowed by inheritance with these coveted treasures have been forced to part with them to the advantage of affluent persons whose forbears were neither English Puritans nor Hollanders nor French Huguenots. But with the passage of time and the advance of real civilization, the passion of "having and holding" grows less and impersonal admiration greater, the thing becomes more interesting in itself, and the question of "mine and another's" fades into thin air. As the knowledge of any art or science is propagated, the material expressions of the subject, whatever it may be, are coveted less and less by those who understand their principles; the knowledge of their development or their workings taking the place of the selfish desire to have them always within the range of grasp or vision. As an illustration of this truth within our present theme, the Chippendale chair will serve amply, since the possessor who has acquired one of its kind in sharp competition with another collector is but poorly repaid in his mere sense of ownership. His pleasure, born in the market-place, is of a low order. The real possessor is the person who feels the grace of the "cabriole", who takes keen pleasure in the skilful piercings and carvings, who knows that the "claw-and-ball *motif*" symbolizes the dragon of evil seeking to crush the pearl of purity, according to an ancient Oriental legend popularized in the art of the eighteenth century. To that person belongs the precious chair, whether it is set as

Bedford Wing Chair, from the factory of L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N.Y.

either heirloom or acquisition in his own drawing or living-room, or whether it is included in a princely assemblage of kindred pieces in some American museum for all to see, but for none to monopolize.

It may not be superfluous to repeat here that the eighteenth century was the Golden Age of cabinet-making. Previous to its opening, the names of experts in this artistic industry did not rise above those of less skilful workers, since, according to the judgment of the Middle Ages, effort was corporate, rather than individual. The architect often laid with his own hands some portion of the stones of the building that he had designed. Following his lead, the maker of beautiful furniture not only imagined the complete whole of each of his pieces, but was able himself to execute every detail of the carving or inlay. From the seventeenth century there is preserved the name of but a single family of cabinet-makers, headed by the famous Andre' Boulle, attached to the French Court, who treated cabinets, tables and especially clocks, with a casing of tortoise shell, beneath which shines a costly fabric of dark red satin. His work and that of his various relatives is still admired for its perfect execution, but its showy quality, heightened by fire-gilt applications, precludes its display, except in historical collections.

This glittering phase of furniture was of short duration. The immense palace, like that at Versailles, and the even greater one planned for

Whitehall, London, by Inigo Jones, proved itself impossible of maintenance. In France there succeeded a type of royal residence represented by the two Trianons, the smaller and more admired of which is even less pretentious than was the White House at Washington before the addition of the Roosevelt wings. In England the splendid Elizabethan and Jacobean mansions, like Burghley House and Hatfield House, and Blenheim Castle dating from the Restoration, the country residences, with their E or their H-shaped plan, were followed by the modest, square, "portico-and-pediment" type of the Queen Anne (1702-1714) and Georgian periods (1714-1820). In the last named of these the style of certain furnishings first presented by Thomas Chippendale, second of the name, and gradually modified by Hepplewhite, Sheraton and Robert Adam, was admirably fitted to the architectural surroundings.

Under Hepplewhite (+1786) and his widow (A. Hepplewhite and Company) the chair lost its "cabriole" leg; this member becoming perpendicular, tapering downward and ending in a somewhat expanded foot, although it was not always fluted, as in the contemporary French Louis XVI models. The back assumed the outline of an heraldic shield and the splats the form of a lyre: these being the most characteristic marks of the design. The same features naturally reappear in the Hepplewhite sofa which shows as frankly as the Chippendale model, the deriva-

tion of the multiple seat from the chair of which it is the repetition in either duplicate or triplicate: a fact which is equally emphasized in the French Louis XIV and Louis XVI pieces, differing from the English by their gilded frames and their tapestry, their embroidered or brocaded backs.

The rapid change from a considerable weight to lightness without loss of stability, beyond all other qualities, impresses the observer of collections of British furniture representing the last decades of the eighteenth century. The name Hepplewhite represents a style rather than a man, since there is an almost total lack of documents with which to clarify the life of the master cabinetmaker who bore it. And, furthermore, it is most difficult to designate pieces of work upon which he set his sign manual. But the furniture called after him reflects so perfectly the spirit of the short period that those few years can be lived anew, if only the cabinets, tables and seats necessary to a single room, be given a touch of arrangement. Aristocrats of both sexes, as if conjured by white magic, garbed and mannered correctly, drop into their proper places. Verses of elaborate, yet most delicate structure, celebrating a smile, a dimple, a curl, or it may be a fan or a beauty-patch, seem to float in the sweet scented air and minuets, played by phantom hands, sound from invisible, flute-voiced spinets. The Hepplewhite furniture has the power of re-creating instantly all that the favorite English minor poet of some thirty years past, Mr. Austin Dobson, evoked in

Arm Chair, from the factory of
L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

his "Old-World Idylls", wherein he reproduced the eighteenth century, as it had never before been done in the verse of his native language.

The charm of Hepplewhite pieces is one and the same, whether they are major or minor, as is evident upon consecutive examination of a cabinet and a tea-caddy or of a tall urn with faceted sides, executed in mahogany and intended for service as a knife-box; the latter design being familiar in the United States, owing to the use made of it in silver by our eminent Colonial metalsmith and patriot, Paul Revere.

To be thoroughly effective, works of the Hepplewhite style should be seen in complete groups, rather than singly, since their slender lines and their ornament, often painted or japanned, do not easily agree with things of grosser make. For this reason, even when the prices may be easily met by the would-be owner, they should be used with knowledge and discretion. Furthermore, they should be treated with great care, since their originals were justly criticized for the lack of endurance of the paint applied to silken upholstery and for the same defect in the japanning of the satinwood.

These evils were remedied by an extensive use of inlay which distinguishes the work of the man whose name, Thomas Sheraton (1754-1806) stands second, if indeed it should not be first, in the history of English furniture. The name so honored, represents also, in this case, a person who, in the modern speech of the American street,

would be termed a "harmless crank"—in other words, but too often a neglected genius. In the opinion of the authority Pendenel-Brodhurst, several times here previously quoted, "Sheraton was a strange blend of mechanic, inventor, artist, mystic and religious controversialist."

This opinion, quite justified by biographical facts, occasions great surprise in one who hears it announced for the first time and who knows little more of the cabinet maker than will enable him to select pieces of wooden furniture showing the Sheraton characteristics. The better-informed person will, however, associate the mechanic with Sheraton's poverty of birth, which is asserted in all records of his career; then, as the possession of mental and spiritual gifts is restricted to no one social state, he will readily imagine and accept the inventor, artist, mystic and religious fanatic, as logical and most progressive, revolving phases of a single human life. Devoted during his very brief school days to geometry and drawing, in which he was largely self-taught, the future expert craftsman first claimed public attention by his pamphlet entitled: "A scriptural illustration of the doctrine of regeneration" (published 1782), which would invite comparison with similar religious-literary, not to say tiresome, efforts of the Puritans of New England, rather than appear to prophesy the opening of an artistic career notable for excursions into the regions of the fanciful.

But the artist in Sheraton was, as may be repeated, only one of several "revolving phases"; for, only two years before his death, at the age of fifty-five, he was described by one who lodged with him a week, as "living in a poor street in London, his house half shop, half dwelling, and himself looking like a worn-out Methodist preacher, with threadbare black coat". His poverty did not dismay him. Like many Frenchmen of to-day, belonging to the professional class, he did not revolt against sordid surroundings. His constant creative efforts in various branches of mental activity stifled an ill-humour which he showed only when, in his pompous treatises upon design, he disparaged his contemporaries, from Chippendale and Hepplewhite to the numerous,necessary, but nameless workers who propagated the styles of these masters. And it must be confessed that while ridiculing and reviling them, he, at the same time, exploited them. His own pitiable words reveal his attitude when he writes: "I can assure the world that though I am employed in racking my invention to design fine and pleasing cabinet-work, I can be contented to sit upon a wooden-bottomed chair, provided I can but have common food and raiment with which to pass through life in peace."

Truly, such testimony, given in a moment of calmness, can not be doubted, but the source of its inspiration must be explained. Sheraton's "peace in poverty" did not result from circumstances that permitted him to own but two cups

with their saucers; thus forcing his wife and his daughter to drink from "little porringers", when a rare guest presented himself for afternoon tea. His self-confessed, prevailing mood resulted from no existing facts. It was created by the consciousness of his power to realize in solid substance what he saw in his imagination. The slender forms and sweeping curves of his chairs and sofas and tables were the frankest and most exact expressions of his exaltation which was apparently so baseless and unreasonable, but in reality so justifiable.

The contributions of this dreamer of "revolving phases" to what may be truly called his art, were many and valuable, if only his better and earlier period be considered. Like Chippendale and Hepplewhite, he devoted his special talents to the chair; giving the legs and back a crispness and emphasis—almost a petulance—that had been wanting in Hepplewhite, who, in his time, had relieved the Chippendale heaviness. To the sideboard which, under the second of the great English cabinet-makers, had been reduced almost to a mere serving table, Sheraton restored importance and beauty. Emphasizing its development from the chest, he imparted to the body a firm, delicate roundness which satisfies the eye; causing it to return again and again to the contour, just as the Louis XV cabinets with their swollen body-curves and their insufficient, weak legs, repel the observer and are saved from utter ugliness only by the beauty of their material and the refinement of its surface treatment.

The last named piece of furniture underwent at the hands of the English masters a change which increased its usefulness. Beginning as a chest, it attained, as it is necessary to re-state, a superb development in its simplest form during the Early or Florentine Renaissance (fifteenth century). At the same time, there appeared a complicated type, that is, a combination of two chests: one serving as a base and now opening with double doors or like a modern drawer; the other superposed, standing on end, having a depth equal to the length of the base, but being of much less width, in order to leave free for service, as a shelf, some portion of the top of the lower chest. Finally, the upper of the two bodies was cut perpendicularly at the middle, providing a second pair of doors, and the piece was complete. Since the cabinets so built, offered a quite extensive field for panelling, the Italians therein indulged their love of ornament; using patterns of rare marbles and of semi-precious stones, as also carving the structural material in the low, refined and finely-proportioned relief so characteristic of the period. Many of these labors of skill and patience were imported into France and there widely copied, up to the accession of Henry IV (1589), when French art rejected foreign influence and began, in all branches, to erect a national school. In the same country inlay and applications of metal composed the ornament of the cabinets produced during the seventeenth century, and, in the eighteenth, the type was further complicated with a writing desk,

Dresser, from the factory of
L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

the glorified form of which is the richest and most-imposing existing piece of furniture—the *bureau* (desk) of King Louis XV (1715-1774), executed by two of the greatest of French cabinet-makers, Oeben and Riesener, between the years 1760-69, and now preserved in the Museum of the Louvre.

Meanwhile, the humbler form—the "poor relation", as it were—of the cabinet-desk, was developed also in France. Named at first the "cylinder-top writing table", its principal feature was its cover, formed of a single, solid, curved piece of wood, against which there were many objections. To obviate certain of these the cover was transformed into a "tambour": that is, a series of narrow strips or slats of wood, jointed and mounted on canvas; so constituting a firm protection, when it was desirable that the piece be closed and, when it was opened, folding easily and retiring into an unseen space. This principle, of great practical value, is still most active, by virtue of the law of the "survival of the fittest", in the American "roll-top" desk: a species whose countless individuals people the "sky-scrapers" of our great ocean-and lake-cities; while the majority of those who use them ignore their French origin and regard them as one of the myriad proofs of our native ingenuity.

In following the development of the cabinet across the English Channel, one finds prominent during the Golden Age (second half of the eighteenth century) an easily recognizable descendant of the barbarian chest. This is the dignified,

elegant piece now generally known as the "high-boy" (*haut bois*—high wood), which, according to certain authorities, is not the original name: the older and more preferable one being "chest of drawers". At all events, the latter term is self-explanatory, since one who had never seen the object represented by it, could easily imagine its general form. To illustrate the Chippendale influence one may indicate a chest which presents a series of seven storeys and consists in theory of two joined bodies, with the upper separated from the lower by a well defined molding. The lower body, in reality an architectural base, has a height one third that of the upper, and is supported upon cabriole legs, the knees of which are carved with acanthus scrolls, as is also the edge of the entire front pointed downward, and the whole surface of a central panel placed between the two drawers which make the lowest storey. The admirably executed carving of this portion of the piece, although it displays the chief plant-*motif* of classic design, is decidedly Chinese in treatment, as will appear logical and natural to one acquainted with Chippendale's so-called "Oriental period". On the contrary, at the summit of the piece, no trace of the East meets the eye. Above the topmost drawers—in this storey three in number—there is a band of delicate, interlaced lines recalling the Irish manuscripts of the seventh Christian century; again above there are fine, tooth-shaped blocks or "dentils", such as occur in the cornices of Greek and Roman temples of the Ionic and

Corinthian Orders; finally, above the dentils, appears the striking gable design used in English and American exterior and interior doorways of the eighteenth century and known as the "broken pediment"—a form which may be quickly understood by sketching a long triangle of slight elevation and then cutting out the center with a concave curve which shall touch the base; afterward filling the opening with a bust or an elaborate vase. In the model here described the central *motif* is the head of an exceptionally ugly woman—plainly a great lady—set upon a carved pedestal and flanked by two heavy acanthus scrolls which terminate toward the center the curves of the broken cornice; while at the extreme ends of the front and behind the cornice, before it begins to curve, rise two egg-shaped funeral urns draped with palls.

This "chest of drawers" or "highboy", preserved in the "Philadelphia Room" of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum, is an enviable treasure, if it be judged from the point of view of material and execution. But as a harmonious design it leaves something to be desired. Its sturdy, rectangular body, raised upon cabriole legs—although they are firm and well proportioned—suggests the figure of a man of large frame mounted upon short stilts. And further, the "broken pediment", over-ornamented, and faulty by a mingling of too heavy and too light elements, could be replaced advantageously by beautiful carving in low relief similar to that which so

finely emphasizes the legs and the skirting of the base.

Again, as in the history of the chair, one passes from the impressive, ponderous quality of the Chippendale style to lighter and more intimate types intended for the "square houses", compact and definite in arrangement, of the last three decades of the eighteenth century. In the very earliest years of this period, teeming with worthy British statesmen, men of letters, artists and actors, Robert and James Adam, the greater sons of an honorable Scotch architect, erected the buildings of the now famous Adelphi Terrace; employing to decorate their interior walls with figures and *motifs* reminiscent of Pompeii, then but recently discovered, the classically minded Angelica Kauffmann and her second husband, the Italian Antonio Zucchi, fragments of whose paintings still remain to delight the residents, numbered among whom are Bernard Shaw and Sir James Barrie, the best literary friend of all English-speaking children.

For the furniture of some of these houses and apartments the Brothers Adam themselves provided designs, but it is also known that they entered into a contract with Chippendale, and it is clear that the influences followed by them were similar to those which guided Sheraton—perhaps it were best to say that the architects and the cabinet-maker were all admirers of the contemporary French Louis XVI style, and all students of that phase of Roman art which was

illustrated in the buried and excavated cities of Campania.

During this Roman revival which was further aided by the artistic tendencies of authoritative French Revolutionists, like the painter David, pieces of furniture, whenever possible, became dual or even multiple in their uses. By this means a large collection of objects was avoided and an abundance of background obtained, in accordance with the aesthetic principles then prevailing; as we see illustrated in the portrait of Madame Re'-camier, where the Subject is posed in profile upon a *chaise longue* with a backward rolling arm, like Hepplewhite's window-seats, and only one other furnishing—a tall classic lamp—is admitted, lest the attention of the observer should be too long diverted from the figure. Yet there was, it is true, another purpose in combining several useful pieces under the semblance of the one which offered the most attractive appearance. That purpose was economy, since the materials employed by the best craftsmen and demanded by good society were largely tropical products, such as mahogany and satinwood, to import which was exceedingly costly under the then existing conditions of transportation. These comments will serve to justify the variants of the highboy or cabinet, which might include the piece just named —a bookcase of several shelves with leaded glass doors, having often, between the two pieces of the body, a highly polished slab which could be drawn out to provide a writing table.

Highboy, from the factory of
L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

In the combinations of this "harlequin furniture", as it was then called, Sheraton was deeply interested, being, perhaps, the chief formulator and promoter of the ideas underlying them; carrying his ingenuity to the point of inventing a library table which contained a step-ladder to reach the uppermost of the bookshelves lining the room. But in the later years of his life, as he fell under the influence of the ponderous Napoleonic or "Empire" style, he gave to that heaviness, which was at least dignified, a grotesque quality quite sufficient to repel the observer possessing even the rudiments of taste.

Thus, with the death of the third of the artist cabinet-makers (1806), ended the brilliant half-century of English excellence in their special branch of industry. In France, the school of interior decoration which had produced such delightful representatives as Oben and Riesener previously mentioned, as David Roentgen, Gouthière, Rousseau de la Rottière and Caffieri, famous for his metallic ornaments, had passed from existence with the outbreak of the Revolution. But things once created, never cease to be. The modified ideas of these men—especially of those that were British among them—and, in some instances, the objects that they had fashioned with their own hands, were taken to the Atlantic coast of North America. And there, fertilized by them, the descendants of the furniture "primates", the bed and the chest, multiplied exceedingly in the forms of chairs and sofas, cabinets and their various

derivatives, highboys and lowboys, side-boards and tables and all other wooden furnishings of the houses of our ancestors.

In these small, early centers of patriotism and commercial activity, many of the articles necessary to comfort and the maintenance of social life, were at first produced by persons who, lacking special training, yet possessed general adaptability and much intelligence. And they, by force of understanding clearly the essentials of anything they set themselves to make, were enabled to give satisfaction to the three classes of their patrons: the "worldly people", who for political or economic reasons had taken up their residence in America and were ready, for the time being, to abandon a high degree of luxury and elegance; the religiously-minded, who regarded beds and chairs as mere devices to assure a brief respite from overpowering cares, and who classed all things of beauty as snares set by Satan for the undoing of God's children; finally, the laborers, agricultural and industrial, whose lives were consumed in physical effort and who had neither the time nor the taste to criticize the composition of their surroundings.

So, left free from paralyzing censure, the Early American cabinet-maker developed his interesting industry side by side with the silversmith, although the latter in New England, when a church member, was more often entrusted with office connected with the public treasury, and in one instance, at least, issued the silver coin of Massa-

chusetts (Pine Tree Shilling). To parallel in furniture the names of silversmiths, such as those of the men of Boston, Hull, Coney, Paul Revere and Edward Winslow, of Peter van Dyke, Jacob Boelen and Philip Goelet, residents of New York, and of others in Newport, Rhode Island, in Pennsylvania and in Baltimore, is an impossible task. But the chairs and tables of the so-called "Philadelphia School" of furniture-makers challenge the tea-urns, tankards and porringers of satin-like surface, which are their neighbors in the historical collection of the Metropolitan Museum. Nor will any critic dispute the claims of the Scottish Duncan Phyfe, established first in Albany, N. Y. (1784?) and later in New York City, to a skill and finish equal to that of his London rivals. As to his designs—such as his noted sofa having two lyres with whalebone strings inserted in each of the backward-rolling arms—they certainly invite criticism by their unjustifiable mingling of very light lines with heavy masses. Further, they have been judged as wanting in originality. But the latter defect is common to the period. It is not that of the individual master. A limited number of ideas, capable of certain, almost predetermined variations and combinations, formed the working capital with which the artist cabinet-makers, French, British and American—of the late eighteenth and the very beginning of the nineteenth century proceeded to ventures dependent for their success upon the talent of the speculator (for such the craftsman really was) and

scarcely to a less degree upon the influences surrounding him.

The first third of the last century having ended, taste, that elusive, instantly recognized, but scarcely definable element of culture declined. In France the showy and the ugly triumphed under the rule of Napoleon III, who, with his beautiful Spanish wife, was responsible for the national disaster of 1870. In England, until well into the second third of the long reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) the hideous haircloth sofa, with its yet more hideous antimacassar, the equivalent of the American "tidy", occupied the post of honor among the furnishings of the middle-class dwelling. In the United States, as the quality of our public men grew less admirable, until in place of statesmen like Washington, Jefferson and the Adamses, we were forced to suffer from the corrupt party-leader and the "boss"; so, at the same time and in the same measure our material environment changed its aspect: until from the age of mahogany, rosewood and satinwood we were plunged into the infernal pit of "golden oak" flooded with a paste-like varnish, and of plush upholstery in the crudest and most nerve-racking colors.

The lowest point of this slow descent into the realms of the ugly corresponds to the "Re-construction Period" following the Civil War (1861-1865), when those who had enriched themselves —for the most part unlawfully— through furnishing equipments or provisions to the armies, sought

to adapt themselves to what they regarded as their new and distinguished position. Those persons, of necessity, could have but one goal: expenditure and display. It was easily attained and the far-reaching effects of their efforts wrought havoc throughout the country by lowering the standards of art criticism and even of morality.

The evil was, however, temporary. A decade later, the centennial celebration of American independence offered occasion for a great exposition, the beneficent influences of which recall the motto given by the then reigning Queen of Great Britain to the first World's Fair in 1851: "She has bound together in victorious peace things separated by distance." It was then that the farmers of the Middle West and beyond, who had never before travelled farther than their State capital or even their county-seat, flocked with their families to Philadelphia, there to examine for themselves, crudely or intelligently, according to their capacity, the results of the movement, then not long previously begun by both science and art in the direction of the people. They witnessed, without realizing what was offered to their observation, indications of changes soon to occur, which, within the following half-century, were completely to revolutionize national life, by preventing the isolation of communities, by permitting the tone of an individual human voice to be distinguished equally in a conversation between Boston and Seattle and in words passed from Wall Street to the Borough of the Bronx.

Bed, from the factory of
L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

To calculate the possibilities of the Bell (or, perhaps, the Meucci) telephone was beyond the power of all save the most imaginative. It was quite otherwise with an exhibit involving the most essential of daily foods for the adult person: the production of bread, healthful and palatable. Humble in its scope, when compared with the telephone, the enterprise of the Austrian bakers had yet a great potential scientific and economic value, later to be transmuted into good stomachs and good humour. The fine merchandise of this exhibit delighted its patrons. The exhibitors, gratified with their success, decided to establish themselves permanently in the United States, with the result that to-day Vienna bread and the Fleischmann yeastcake are in use from the palatial residence or hotel to the poorest workingman's tenement.

The vitalizing effect of the Philadelphia Centennial may be inferred from the two outstanding examples cited. To its immediate influence may be ascribed important, permanent reforms in all the fine and the industrial arts, as practised in the United States; as, also, corresponding movements in many fields of scientific research, and in higher and secondary education. To its appeal domestic architecture showed itself especially sensitive and in its train followed logically everything that is now implied in the term "interior decoration"; so that by the beginning of the last decade of the century houses greatly improved from older models in appearance, in convenience

and in all the details of sanitation, had multiplied exceedingly in the vicinity of the larger cities, in order to meet the demands of what has been named the "suburban drift": that is, the tendency, increasing with every passing year, of those engaged in professions and in business activities to regard the town as a workshop to be occupied during the day and to be vacated at night, in favor of freer air and wider ranges of vision.

Then, as a sense of the power and dignity of middle-class life developed among the people, the absurdity of imitating things devised for the castle and the palace became apparent. A demand for simplicity in private surroundings made itself insistent and the cabinet-maker reached anew for his drawing pencil with which to lay the ugly ghosts that obsessed his eyes. He called to his aid structural simplicity and the woods of his native country. The so-called "Spanish-Mission" type of furniture sprang into existence. At first awakening interest by its singularity, it was soon seen to be hopelessly heavy and, in some instances, childishly crude, as differing from the earliest New England pieces, whose primitiveness contained, as it were, a prophecy of progress. The "Mission" type was also marred by details inconsiderately adapted from the Jesuit architecture of Southern California, which, reproduced in miniature and removed from their proper surroundings, struck grating discords.

Other experiments were necessary to eliminate

the semi-barbarous curves and crosses of the type and to replace them with a quality less regional, more impersonal, more responsive to the requirements of an advanced, but democratic civilization. To meet these requirements the furniture of the "straight line" came into being naturally and inevitably. Its austerity was softened by the beauty of its substance and of its surface treatment. But it was massive to excess, it gave the impression of inertia, and was well capable of provoking a disinclination to move and to think in the minds of those subjected to its influence. In its effort to reveal structure, to be frank and simple in expression, it allowed one member to pierce another almost fiercely and permitted an aggressive display of stout wooden pins which made ungraceful projections along the course of the uprights. Furthermore, regarded as a whole, this style carried the impersonal quality to an extreme. It suggested no descent from preceding types and pointed toward no probable developments in the future. It appeared to lack relationship with continuous, progressive life and, therefore, seemed less well placed in private residences than in fine clubhouses and at other points of select assembly, where its soothing color and delightful finish first greeted the eye and the touch, and the short duration of the visit prevented the analysis or even the perception of its irritating finality.

The furniture of the "straight line", once it had accepted the limitations it had striven to

overstep, remained in public favor and has made an important, permanent contribution to the American industry of which it is the product. Its most intelligent champion was Mr. Gustav Stickley, now retired, the eldest of a family of German-Americans, born in the Middle West, and all of them, at times, separately or rarely in associated pairs, engaged in the production of things of household equipment. With their workshops situated widely apart, they were able to progress individually and all of them have become well known. But it remained for the youngest of the brothers to lead back the industry to which he had chosen to devote himself, from a by-path terminating abruptly, into the broad highway of historical development—the only safe line of march, whether for persons who impel themselves or for things to which the impulse is given by man.

The furniture down to the present time signed with the firm name of L. & J. G. Stickley (the latter of whom is now deceased), owes its existence to the first mentioned of the two brothers, whose sound judgment and the sense of the fitting, coupled with business acumen, has protected his creations from over-conservatism on the one hand and over-audacity on the other. Unlike the pieces of the "straight line", they do not conceal their ancestry. They are confessedly evolutions from Early American types, and, as such, make the appeal of almost personal property to those of us whose forefathers belonged to the sturdy Eng-

lish yeomanry or to the gentry who colonized Virginia and the eastern shores of Maryland and Pennsylvania. They invite the observer's glance, and, having once obtained it, do not dismiss it rudely, by stating in a single short sentence all that they have to tell in the language of line and mass. They establish themselves slowly in the esteem of one who examines or acquires them, as a prudent man reveals himself gradually to those from whom he seeks something more than an acquaintanceship of an hour or a day.

The chief excellence of the Leopold Stickley designs is that while they have no savor of ostentation, they do not, as did the over-weighty, uncompromising "straight line" furniture, seem to sneer at the refinements of life. They speak the language of old homes in which, as guests, long years since, while listening to pure English as it flowed from the lips of the host, we may have heard through an open door of an upper storey the creaking of bed-cords beneath the hands of some woman member of the household, as she carefully spread the patch-work counterpane. Or again in the Stickley showroom, in passing a dresser but just issued from the hands of the finishing workman, we may be startled for a moment as we note its bare and vacant shelf. For where is the tall glass decanter, with its capacious paunch engraved with goodly figures, and descended from our great-great grandfather, which, still in our own youthful days, dispensed New England rum to heighten the flavor of a pud-

Table and Bench, from the factory of
L. & J. G. Stickley, Inc., Fayetteville, N. Y.

ding-sauce or to form the chief ingredient of a strong, steaming punch, brewed to protect us against the shrewd, autumnal air?

It is but a platitude to say that we like best that with which we are familiar, but the truth contained therein revives its interest, if we pause briefly to consider it. Long companionship is one of the chief factors in family affection and our sentimental attachment to towns and to houses in which we have once lived, is the result of associations accumulated through the passage of time. An example of the same truth lies at the base of the attractive power possessed by the Leopold Stickley models of household furniture. They recall by their presence, without tiresone sermonizing, the best period of our history as a people—those times of heroic struggle, "when none was for a Party, but all were for the State"; when the threats of Tyranny to reduce to a sheep-like obedience the self-reliant population of our Atlantic seaboard were so strong that everyone forgot to be selfish.

The historic quality of the Stickley pieces is, however, one of their minor excellences. Their chief claim to consideration lies in their obedience to the laws of structure; in their adherence to the essentials of their species, whether bed, chest, chair or table; in their freedom from confusing exaggerations which would tend to disguise as far as possible their functions, and to reduce them to an assemblage of individuals whose very names would be doubtful. On the contrary, these pieces

do not, as it were, frown upon judicious ornament, as the productions of the "straight line" school appeared to do. On occasion, they possess it in some detail of their own composition, and the various tables and chests can be easily imagined as supporting harmonizing vases of flowers or other small accessories: not as if they were imposed upon them, but as if they were there by invitation.

All these truths will be acknowledged by any one who will give more than a passing glance at the accompanying illustrations; by an observer who will keep in mind the "primates" of all furniture—the bed and the chest. For then, by supplying the "missing links", he will be enabled to judge of the fidelity with which the Stickley models have guarded the essentials of the originals; at the same time, showing a necessary development, meeting in their actual forms the general requirements of modern times, and fitting the tastes of the middle-class American public.

A few examples will suffice to indicate the proper path of the observer. It may be begun by any one of the beds, all of which meet the eye with an offer of comfort, made by generous breadth and a regulation of height which preclude all sense of confinement. An historical allusion is sometimes contained in the headboard which has a quasi-Adam period double curve with a central void, like the pediments of many eighteenth century clocks. The footboard, (unless very low)

is always widely pierced: in many instances reduced at the top to a spindle-shaped crosspiece agreeable to the eye and matching in its turnings those of the uprights which it connects. Finally, the modern spirit receives its response in the strong suggestion of fresh air given by the design in its outline and structure.

In this collection the evolutions of the second of the two furniture "primates", the chest, are no less interesting than those of the bed. The most evident transformations of the all-essential primitive receptacle for valuables are here represented under the various names of chest of drawers, highboy, dresser (in the old New England sense), sideboard, bureau, *chiffonier* and desk; the majority of them showing substantial proportions which occasionally approach heaviness. But among them there is no instance of dull design. A molding, a baluster-upright, an edge with slightly *rococo* curves, always intervenes, like humour in a law argument, to disperse the settling fog of monotony. Furthermore, the perfect surface of the wood—invariably a harmonized, invisible combination of maple and cherry, with the latter for all flat tops—invites the touch, like a well-groomed human skin. A remoter development of the chest—the dressing-table—is adapted to feminine use by a lightening of proportions and a carefully framed mirror, it may be, reminiscent of the Louis XVI style.

As for the chair, child of the bench and therefore grandchild of the chest, its variations are

very numerous among the Leopold Stickley models. Making in general stronger historical allusions than many of the other species, their memories, when of Sheraton, are stated with a robustness which was foreign to the great English cabinet-maker. Their backs sometimes offer the delightful ribbon-*motif*, so grateful and comforting to the human frame, and sometimes, instead, the very notable splat of urn shape which, culminating in the Georgian period, originated previously under Queen Anne. Again, there are other Stickley chairs, although they are not here illustrated, which, finished with absolute care, like the more elaborate shapes, have a bare wooden seat, broad arms with thick, rounded edges, and heavy spindles forming the back and side railings: a consistent whole, indicating the non-luxurious seat of the real farmer, such as would have been fitting to the most primitive rural New England kitchen and would now have place in a summer camp. Altogether, these chairs of many types fascinate the lover of "antiques", as they bring before his eyes, like a whirling masquerade, memories of two hundred years of great cabinet-making. But their chief value lies in their appeal to "common sense", their adaptability to the needs of the middle class: that most important factor in the prosperity of the United States.

A large volume with no flavor of pedantry, no similarity to the wearisome catalogue, might be written upon the productions of the Leopold Stickley workshop. Then, if intelligently read,

it would go far in reforming the selfishly-inspired enthusiasm for Early American relics so prevalent among us, which is based upon exclusive, personal possession and pride in one's own ancestors, like the similar interest in Revolutionary societies. It would aid in diffusing a knowledge of the structural principles of furniture and of creating standards of judgment applicable by modification to an endless variety of other subjects.

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